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THE  
SABBATH SCHOOL  
TEACHER  
AND HIS WORK.

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By D. D. McLEOD,  
PARIS, ONT.



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THE AMATEUR PRESS

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"THE LORD hath not set up Churches only that a few old Christians may keep one another warm while they live, and then carry away the Church with them when they die; no, but that they might with all care, and with all the obligations and advantages to that care that may be, nurse still successively another generation of subjects to our Lord, that may stand up in His Kingdom when they are gone."



"EVERY Christian family ought to be, as it were, a little Church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by His rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual."

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## INTRODUCTORY.

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THE Sabbath School was originally intended for the youth growing up outside of the church. The old theory was, that parents who were in the church should teach their own children out of the Bible. That this was as much their duty as to feed and clothe them. And long before modern Sabbath-Schoolism was known, this was a duty attended to very faithfully on the whole by the parents in our church, and was a duty which the church insisted on being attended to by the parents. The Pastor and Session subjected parents and children alike to catechetical instruction on Scripture truth at stated times, and so for a time did very effectively labour to the bringing up of generations that were able to step into the place of those who had gone before, and take up their work. However, the times have changed, and we have in some respects changed with them. Now it is recognised as a principle in modern Sabbath-Schoolism, that all the children of the church should attend the Sabbath School. This principle has its disadvantages, as well as advantages. And very many in the church are feeling anxious on this subject. It is claimed that

never was such a stimulus given to Bible study throughout the world, as by our modern Sabbath School system. That it has popularized Bible study and Bible knowledge. No doubt much can be said in support of this position. Publishers have found in the Sabbath School a mine which they very diligently work. They have done much to advertise and popularize this branch of the church's work. They flood the country with all kinds of cheap religious writings on the lessons, and in this way no doubt much good is effected. The abundance of these writings, and the competition for support, is almost bewildering to the schools and teachers. And if the good effected bore a fair proportion to the money expended in these modern furnishings, we would certainly have cause to rejoice.

But in the face of all this formidable array of Sabbath School machinery, let us not forget or overlook facts. And first: that if the Sabbath School discourages parental teaching around the family altar, it is not a blessing to the church or the world. God meant to teach parents, by making them teach their own children. The parent who does not teach his own children is losing the best kind of teaching for himself God can supply him with. If Sabbath-Schoolism encourages parental teaching, as it is said to do, then it would be the greatest blessing the church possesses. On this point, among Christian people there is some anxiety. And second: to send a child to the Sabbath School does not secure that child being taught any-

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thing at all, unless there are competent teachers in the school. And these are not everywhere easily secured. We should only send our children to the school when there are properly qualified teachers to instruct them. And the church should endeavour to get even those parents who are deficient in knowledge to do something in the way of teaching their children, rather than leave them idle; and take their children to be taught by those who, though willing, are not competent for so high and sacred a duty. Nothing can surpass the noble self-sacrifice of our multitudinous teachers. No one would detract from the honour and gratitude they deserve. But the other side of the truth referred to must not be lost sight of. It is necessary that the church should preserve an equilibrium in her efforts, and not permit her labours to be unduly drawn in one direction, to the neglect of other duties more fundamental. Religion in our homes,—family religion,—that is what we need most to cultivate at present. To get parents to maintain family worship. To get parents to spend an hour on Sabbath with their families over the Bible, that is what we need. To get parents to teach the catechism to their children, that is also what we need. And if the Sabbath School helps us to this, then let it be encouraged to the utmost. Many say it does; that the lesson affords parents an opportunity for this good work. Let us hope that it is so; always bearing in mind that Sabbath-Schoolism will only be effective

when behind it there is parental training and parental authority.

It seems to me, without enlarging further on a subject on which there is so much to be said, that if our Sabbath School army of workers, with all its wealth of equipment, was to direct its enthusiasm to the ingathering of the children outside of Christian families, it would do a greater and more needed work than it is now accomplishing. It would be the grandest mission enterprise in the world. How many thousands now neglected might it gather into the church. This aspect of the church's responsibility ought to be made more prominent. And each Sabbath School should be a centre of Home Mission effort. It would be a noble spectacle to see the church of Christ engaged on Sabbath in the work of teaching the untaught thousands around her doors, even though Christian parents should be compelled to spend the day in instructing their own families, instead of dozing on their easy chairs, or spending the sacred hours in social converse. It is not so obviously the duty of a hard-wrought man to spend his time in teaching the children of those who have more time and ability for such work, while perhaps his own family enjoy far too little of his society. We do not say these things in any spirit of hostility to the great work of the Sabbath School ; but we submit that there are some questions yet to be discussed about this work that have not been taken up in conventions, and we believe that the missionary aspect of Sabbath School work would be revived, to the

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great benefit of the churches and of the cause of Christ.

The following hints to Teachers in regard to their work are offered in the hope of aiding those who may be engaged in this duty ; and are such as twenty years experience in Sabbath School teaching in a variety of schools suggest. That period has seen a great advance in this important enterprise ; and greater things are yet to be expected. One who has taught for years amid the misery and wickedness of the most depraved quarters of a great city, and seen the blessed results of such teaching even in such discouraging fields, cannot but hope for the richest fruits in fields where the work has to be done amid surroundings so much more encouraging, such as we find in the communities where our lot is cast.

Let us not then be weary in well doing ; let us work on in faith, in courage, and in hope, and in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

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## LECTURE I.

# ON THE TEACHER.

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**"If this man were not of God, he could do nothing."**

—JOHN IX., 33.

ONE of the problems which is at present occupying those who are interested in Sabbath School work, is how to procure suitably qualified persons for the office of Teacher. It is everywhere recognised that a Sabbath School teacher ought to know how to do the work of that office to some extent, before he or she enters upon it. And that to do the work of a teacher effectively, requires some effort and some preparation. The old fallacy, that any intelligent or merely respectable member or attender of the church was good enough to make a teacher of, is now quite exploded. It is felt that whatever is to be done in the church for Christ must be done with as much efficiency, and with as skillful adaptation of means to the end in view as in any department of work outside of the church.

For the church, or the Sabbath School department of the church's work, cannot hope to tell on the terribly active forces of wickedness that are at work

around us, unless there be in it not only a spirit of living energy, of tireless perseverance, of undaunted faith, but also a wise and earnest application of the saving truths of the Gospel to the hearts of young and old. From the lifeless, dull, unintelligent class, the young come out untaught, unimpressed, and unimproved, even hardened against the reception of the Gospel. They soon come to look back on the whole thing with contempt. They never felt any power in the truth or in the teacher. Such cases of total failure in our schools are not uncommon. Teachers are ready to confess that they fail in their work. They mourn over it. They anxiously seek counsel as to how to reach greater success. They attend innumerable Conventions. And while they may hear much that is excellent at these meetings, still, in the multitude of counsels and counsellors, in the contradictory statements, in the enthusiastic confusedness of these much frequented meetings, they are not apt to find what they need, in such a simple, compact, and intelligible form that it can be easily carried away.

There is no profession made here to meet all the necessities of the case, nor of our having discovered any remarkable means of providing thoroughly equipped teachers, nor any way by which inefficient teachers can be rendered effective and successful in their work. I simply propose a few general truths applicable to the subject in hand, which may indicate who ought to undertake the work, and how it may be carried on with some hope of success. There appears

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to me no use in laying down a great many rules for the guidance of teachers, that ordinary people cannot hope to carry out, nor a long list of attainments for the most part beyond the reach of those to whom this work must be entrusted ; and yet this is a course often adopted in addressing teachers. A picture of almost superhuman perfection is drawn, and they are told that is what they should be. They are reminded of the Biblical knowledge necessary, almost as much being enumerated as would fit them for commentators. Of the science, and geography, and history that they ought to know ; of the eminent piety they should possess ; of the books they ought to study, and the methods they ought to pursue,—until ordinary persons, busy with the occupations of life, must feel discouraged at the prospect set before them, and the exceeding difficulty of the work in which they desire to be engaged. No doubt all these qualifications and attainments are good and desirable, but in the case of most of our teachers, are quite beyond their reach. Our teachers are generally taken from among those who are busily engaged during the week, who have many labors and cares pressing upon them, and who therefore have but a limited time to prepare for their work, and who, if they engage in it at all, must do so very much just as they are as to attainments, making the best use they can of their past training. It is necessary, therefore, in order to reach the end in view, that the directions and suggestions given for the benefit of teachers should be within the

reach of such persons, and suffice to enable them to use what powers they can place at the disposal of the church with comfort to themselves and with benefit to their class, without laying too great a burden upon them.

Nor does there appear, as has been said, much use in laying down a great number of rules for the guidance of those already in the work. However excellent these rules may be, their very number discourages and prevents their being remembered and applied. Successful teachers cannot be made in this way. Mere directions from without will not impart the things that are essential for the work. Therefore, without referring to any of the excellent advices written for the guidance of teachers, without setting up any impracticable standard of conduct or ability, without laying down any formidable number of rules and principles to be observed in imparting instruction, I would rather occupy this occasion very much with one simple but fundamental principle as to the persons that should be employed in Sabbath School duties.

The question we should first ask is, What is the material we have to make teachers of, and what is the material we should have? Should we take any one that offers himself and engage him in this important sphere of Christian labor? Should we have a standard for the candidates to which they must come up?

Should we not insist on some manifest fitness as essential in order to being employed in this work, not merely as to intellectual ability, but as to character,

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morally and spiritually? This may seem an unnecessary question. But it is not so. Were this question more frequently considered and kept in view we would be saved a great deal of the trouble that arises in connection with our work in the School. Before we admit any one to that work we should see that we have men and women of the right stamp to put into it. Not mere amiable emptiness, nor mere orthodox drones or formalists. Not mere frivolous and uninstructed women, who like the variety and society and mild excitement of Sunday-Schoolism, in its evening meetings and picnics, and conventions and public displays. Nor mere officious and zealous men who like to be in places of prominence and importance in the congregation. Out of such material, or other material of a like kind, no amount of normal teaching will make anything useful or effective. Conventions will not be sufficient to give them the requisite fitness. Helps of whatever kind will not make up for their deficiencies.

The first question then we would press on your consideration would be this, when you or any one proposes to undertake this duty: How far does my character fit me for so important a work?—How far does it entitle me to undertake it? How far is it likely to help or hinder me in it? Will it add to, or take from the power and effect of my teaching? This question as to my fitness for it, morally and spiritually, should come before the question, Do I know enough to engage in it successfully? We think if this question were more carefully

considered, it would prevent many who are unfit for the work thrusting themselves into it—while very few, if any, who were really likely to be of use would be prevented from coming forward to do it. Such persons are too easily discovered, too indispensable, and too conscientious to be long kept back from it. And here the question naturally arises, Ought a confessedly unconverted person to be employed in this duty of teaching in the school? We think the answer to this question on the part of the majority of Christians would be, that such a person ought not to be so employed; and that for many reasons, to all of which we cannot now allude. Such a person, for example, is not in a position to press on the scholars the saving truths of the gospel, with the same interest or intelligence, that one would who has himself passed from death into life.

“Unless the truth has been revealed to me and in me individually, so that I feel it to be the wisdom of God, and the power of God to my salvation and blessedness,—unless my own soul be leaning upon the truth in a genuine, realizing, personal faith, I can never testify of the truth with earnestness, and honesty, and power. If the truth of God has come to me in word only, it will go forth from me in word only, and not in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”

There appears to us as much inconsistency in an unconverted school teacher expounding the way of life, and pressing on children the necessity of salva-

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tion, as there would be in an unconverted minister preaching these truths. Of course we do not advocate any severe or improper judging of the character of persons offering themselves for the work, but simply that they should give such reasonable evidence of their Christian character and intelligence, as is demanded of those who seek admission to the membership of the church. The consideration of what a person's character is, is generally taken into account, even when they are candidates for positions of trust outside of the church altogether.

It is not merely qualifications as to ability that are inquired into, but as to character, because it is felt that mere brilliancy of gifts will not atone for deficiency of principle. And much more should this be the case in any situation where the work to be done is work for Christ. In such employment the whole effect and influence of the work will very much depend on the character behind the work. Behind the work and word spoken there must be the living soul. And this is none the less the case because the parties to be taught are for the most part children. They are even more sensitive to traits of character in a teacher than adults, and as keen to discern inconsistency. They are not any more deceived than their older neighbors, and will be very open either to benefit or injury from the character of their instructors—character which is quite well known generally to the class, and is not concealed by a coating of zeal which lasts only during the time of teaching.

Now though this may seem a very elementary truth to which to call your attention, yet it is one of great importance, and one sometimes very much overlooked by our Teachers and Superintendents, and others who have charge of that work. We are often pained at the unhappy consequences resulting from the neglect of this principle ; at witnessing the glaring contradictions that exist between the teacher's occupation and his life. We hear the teachers enforcing lessons on the attention of the children, which they make not the slightest attempt themselves to carry into practice, even in the presence of the children. We see sometimes an example set to the children, very much at variance with the spirit of the lesson and the occasion. Now however well the lesson may have been taught, such an example will destroy any good effect it may have had ; and it would be much better to lose the teaching of such a teacher, than for the school to have of their example. Teachers do not realize the importance of this point. They fail in many cases to realize the seriousness of their work ; that their work does not consist of, nor cease with the mere hearing of tasks. That they should take an interest in all the exercises of the school, and watch for the impressions of Divine truth on the hearts of their children, and for the spiritual results of their work. For this work is not a mere pastime or interesting occupation, to which a person kindly condescends, out of respect to the wishes of the pastor. But rather it is the very highest kind of work, next to the preaching of the Gos-

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pel, in which we can engage, and work that has momentous issues attaching to it. Teaching children ! Teaching Divine truth to those that are ignorant and out of the way ! It is only a very thoughtless person that can regard it as a trivial occupation, that can be done anyhow, and by any one. It is rather an exercise that requires the skill of the wisest, the love and patience of true and tender hearted disciples. But while this is the case, and while any one who is a fit person to engage in it will regard it in this light, I am not setting up any particular type of character as necessary for this office. Least of all would I desire to have for it the type of long-faced, dull, and ungenial people, who seem to think that it is a part of religion to look and feel continually and uncomfortably serious : as if they were bearing the burden of the world's wickedness always upon their hearts : or as if they were at all times under an overwhelming sense of the awful realities of eternity, being burdened more with the world's shortcomings than with their own, and thinking more about their own comfort in eternity, than about the comfort of other people while here. Let us not set up for such seriousness as that We are not meant always to dwell on the more awful truths of revelation. To do so would distort our thoughts, and unfit us for the discharge of duty. We are not to feel responsible for the whole impiety of the world, but chiefly for our own ; and then we will think enough of that around us. No ; there is room, as we know, for great variety of dispo-

sition, and attainment, and experience in the Christian life, and there is room for all these varieties in the Sabbath School ; but there ought to be no room for persons of manifestly unchristian character, much less for persons of doubtful or bad character. No exigency of the work is a reason for employing such persons. No willingness on their part, nor intellectual fitness on their part, should lead to their being employed. (Let it ever be kept in view that the lesson cannot but receive colour from the medium through which it passes.) This, then, is the one truth to which, in these introductory remarks, I wish to call your attention,—the necessity of those who offer themselves for this department of labour in the church, being persons of *decidedly Christian character*, engaging in it from motives arising from a sense of its divine nature and importance, and anxious for spiritual results from it. When the teacher is of this character, he or she will command the thorough respect of the young people they are instructing, and will generally find it easy to command their attention.

We might go on to show how it is only when we engage in this work in faith and prayer, and bring to bear on it all the spiritual forces of the Christian life, that we can expect the Divine blessing to accompany us in it. But what has already been said implies this ; and the Christian teacher will be as anxious to do this as his Superintendent or Pastor is. The fact that so many of our teachers are comparatively young, makes it very necessary that this view of their res-

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possibility, should he pressed on their attention. It needs this to give direction to their ability and willingness, and to give emphasis and influence to their teaching. It needs this to give favour to their work before God, as well as before their class, and to secure all the aid which a conscience enlightened can impart to work of this kind. When a person of this character can be found to engage in the work, a great many of the questions and problems arising in connection with it are already solved. Such a person has already an acquaintance with the word of God ; understands to some extent its leading doctrines ; realizes their importance, and will endeavour to enforce them with affection and fidelity, on the attention of his class. Such a person comes into the work with no personal ends to serve, from no unworthy motives, and possesses those principles of conduct that render order and discipline possible ; and is prepared to be placed wherever he will be most useful, without consulting only his own inclination. Many of the difficulties that arise in the work would never be met, were we observing this principle more carefully in the selection of teachers. We bring incompetence and self-seeking into the school, and then set up classes to enable it to do properly, what can only be done properly by intelligent and Christian men and women. The example and influence of such a body of teachers, apart even from their teaching, would be of immense benefit in the school, and a great spiritual power in the congregation, whose influence would be widely

felt. If, on the other hand, we have a teacher who is not familiar with the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, we cannot expect him either to interest or benefit his class. Such a one is entirely out of place in the Sabbath School.

But very much of what is written now for the use of teachers seems to go upon the supposition that they are persons of almost no education. That they have extremely little knowledge of the Bible. That they have very little judgment of their own, and ought to put little reliance on it. The minutest and most trifling details are suggested to them with regard to their work, as though they had no interest in that work, which would lead them to seek out and find out how best to do it; no zeal and no intelligence to lead them to prosecute it in the way most likely to be successful. Now if it be really the case that teachers are so ignorant, so childish, as scarcely to know the rudiments of Bible knowledge, and as to require to be taught themselves in the most infantile methods, and to be nursed and dictated to, and directed so much, no wonder that the teaching of teachers should threaten to become a work over and above the work of the school, as formidable as the work of the school itself. And if the teachers are so ignorant as they are represented, then they ought not to be teachers. The teaching of such persons should take place before they are admitted to the school. And if it is said that no others are to be had, then it would be much better to do without them.

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We should demand, as the minimum qualification in a candidate for the office of teacher, an intelligent apprehension of the saving truths of the Gospel, and reasonable evidence in the life, that they are living under the power of such truth. If any other than these are among our teachers, they should be weeded out,—relegated back to the Bible class. It is no use taking such persons into a Normal class. They should first be required to possess a reasonable amount of knowledge of Scripture, and some manifest fitness for their work. This is essential, then, to have first the right material. And if we can get this—intelligent Christian men and women—then they may be left a great deal to their own discretion in carrying on their work. They will realize their own need of instruction, and seek it where it can be got. They will try to do the best they can. They will take a real interest in their work, and become as largely successful as can reasonably be expected. This constant dictation to the teachers, these endless hints, and rules, and classes, most of which assume that the teacher has little intelligence, or that he has unlimited time for preparation, are fitted to render useless any intelligence he does possess. They teach him to look constantly to others for help, to distrust his own judgment, and distract and confuse the mind. Give an intelligent man or woman a class of children, and let them do the best they can with them, and don't worry them with continual advice, or with recommending a hundred different rules and methods. If they are

intelligent; if they have love to Christ, and love to souls, they will teach Bible truth to these children with wisdom and effect in their own way, a way probably as effective as any of the other ways suggested. And they will do so even though they are unacquainted with all the hobbies and nostrums of conventions, or with all the modern ideas as to Sabbath School instruction. Such teachers for the most part taught our fathers, and on the whole probably with as good results as we are teaching the rising generation. The sum of the matter then is, that those only should be adopted as teachers, who are able first of all to teach by character and example.

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## LECTURE II.

ON THE

### QUALIFICATIONS OF THE TEACHER.



As has been stated in the previous Lecture, it seems of little use to lay down a lengthened and formidable list of qualifications as necessary to be possessed by the Teacher, which it is manifest few of the ordinary people from whom our teachers are taken can possess, and which few, even of those most favourably situated, have time or opportunity to acquire. And yet we all feel that there are certain qualifications requisite for the duty of teaching, without which it would be impossible to achieve success, and unreasonable to expect it. In our last Lecture we were considering the subject of the character of the teacher, and came to the conclusion that the first great requisite in a teacher is, that he or she be of a thoroughly decided Christian character. That a right character—a character formed under the moulding and purifying influence of Divine truth—was the first great essential desirable in the case of those who undertake the work of teaching in the Sabbath School. But after this is agreed to, and when we have found one of a decided

Christian character, we may not, after all, have found a very well qualified teacher. Therefore we must not only have regard to character in general, but to the various elements that go to make up that character, both in its spiritual and in its natural aspect. But without further introduction, I would say, that the first absolutely necessary qualification on the part of those possessing a decided Christian character is, that they should *take a hearty interest in the work*. That they should desire to be useful in this particular field of Christian labour; to build up the cause and church of Christ by teaching to the young the saving truths of the Gospel. That they should realize the importance of the Sabbath School work, and desire to see it efficiently carried on, and enter into it themselves with the purpose and object of contributing, so far as they can, to its efficiency. That is in brief what is meant by a hearty interest in the work.

This may seem too elementary a truth on which to dwell, but we have painful evidence in our schools, that it is an essential in the teacher's character too much overlooked. We cannot conceive of any one being of much use in any department of labour in which he does not take a hearty interest. Without that, other gifts, however varied or eminent, will accomplish little. Without that, no matter what talent one may possess, little good will be accomplished. And when we speak of taking an interest in the work, we mean of course an interest in the work in its spiritual aspect. For many persons, while they care no-

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thing for the work in this respect, are yet very fond of taking an active part in church affairs. It may be because they are possessed of an active disposition, or from a love of prominence and influence in the church, or from the mistaken idea that in some way their helping in the work of the church will help also in the matter of their own salvation. We find such persons in every community of professing Christians. Self-important, fussy, conceited, fond of notoriety and of church business, yet not realizing in the slightest degree, the spiritual nature of the duties in which they are engaged; not labouring from love to the Lord Jesus Christ or the souls of their fellow men.

Such persons may take a certain interest in the work of teaching; may be very active and zealous in the performance of their engagements, yet bring no real strength to the school; and are only a weakness upon its staff. Their mind and heart are not brought into subjection to Jesus Christ. They have not a supreme regard to His will. Their aim is not their Saviour's glory. Hence they are generally found very difficult to get along with; too ready to take offence; do not willingly submit to authority; do not seek earnestly, prayerfully, and continuously, the salvation of the souls committed to their care. Such persons cannot take a hearty interest in the work, in the sense in which I use that expression. It is something very different from this that is meant.

When we take an interest in the work of the Sabbath School, we do so, in the first place, because we

believe the work to be one to which we are called as the servants and disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because we have learned to love Him, to rejoice in His salvation, and desire to make known to an unsaved world the love and power of our Saviour. Ourselves saved by His grace, we have felt the obligation to work for Him, to advance His cause in the world, and to gather into His church those that are without. And we undertake the work as given by Him, and as to be done through all opposition and difficulty, for His sake. Only when entered upon in this spirit, and in this belief, can that work be to us a pleasure, and not a drudgery, a sacred duty and not a mere pleasant pastime, a cheerful sacrifice and not a favour conferred, a precious privilege and not a grudgingly performed task. But we have in view in the performance of our duty, not only a strong desire to advance the cause of our Redeemer, but to do this in seeking the salvation of the children committed to our care. And it will be impossible, if such be the spirit of the teacher, that the work can be performed in a slovenly manner. Can we imagine a teacher anxious to reach such ends, being careless, either in preparing the lesson, or in preparing his heart to convey that lesson. Can we imagine a teacher of such a spirit careless as to the conduct of his or her children, either as to their progress or their attendance. The work with them is no mere official work. The mere routine performance of it in a careless spirit does not satisfy the case in any aspect of it, but is utterly defective when we view it

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in this light, as done for the glory of our Lord and the salvation of souls. On the part of those who take an interest in it in this sense, there will be a wise, thoughtful, patient effort to reach the end desired. There will be a use of whatever methods seem most likely to impress the heart and conscience of the young, there will be constant and earnest prayer for guidance in the work, there will be, in short, a faithful discharge of the duties undertaken. Without such an interest in it, and without such motives and aims in view, the work is not likely to be of much use to the scholar, and will be unprofitable and injurious to the teacher.

And no doubt this is the weakness of many teachers, and of many schools. An entire forgetting or ignoring of the great end that should be kept in view, and the consequent doing of the work in a slovenly or careless manner. The not working for Christ, the working to please self. The not seeking the salvation of the children, but the seeking only to get through the work with moderate decency. There may be some very earnest and active teachers who do not keep these high motives before them, and who yet work with sincerity and zeal. I would say nothing to discourage these, only it remains true that ability, sincerity, and zeal, will not make up for the absence of love to Christ, and the interest of these is defective in its not arising from the right motives. Their teaching is likely to be without result spiritually.

But, further, this interest in the work can be looked at not only with reference to the aim and motive, but

with reference to the class more particularly. The true teacher is deeply interested in the welfare of his class, specially in their spiritual condition. No proper teacher can be indifferent on that subject. He will, on the contrary, be ever anxious about it. He will watch the spiritual development of his scholars. He will be quick to encourage any signs of spiritual life. He will constantly pray for their spiritual enlightenment. In short, having a real sympathy with his class, he will be on the watch to advance its interests in every possible way, both in the school and out of the school. He will be anxious about the attendance of his scholars. He will know the reason of their absences, and carefully enquire after them. He will know the character of his scholars' home life. He will make the scholars feel that he is teaching them because he is interested in them, that he is anxious for their salvation. By such a spirit they will be won, and held, but for a mere cold official work of hearing tasks or going over lessons in mere formal routine, they soon learn to have a righteous contempt. Do we not find then, in the absence of this qualification on the part of many teachers, one reason why we so often find our scholars uninterested in their Sabbath School work. Does not this account largely for the irregularity in attendance we complain of. Does it not account for the little progress that is made in learning Bible truth, or in receiving spiritual blessing.

If teachers are not interested in their work, how can we expect the scholars to be? If teachers are not

heartily interested, we cannot expect them to be so. And on the other hand, the spirit of the law is to be a law of love, and the heart is to be a heart of love, as anxious as anxious, and dependent as dependent, for it is as spirit, the best way, independent, pleasure, them for

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hearty in it, if they go through it coldly, how can we expect the scholars to be earnest in their attention? And on the other hand, what is needed to give an impetus to our schools, to make them more attractive and interesting, but that teachers should throw more heart into their work? Why should not teachers be as anxious for the success of the school as the superintendent or the pastor? Why should not they work for it as earnestly? Entering on their work in this spirit, they would find very soon for themselves the best way of carrying it on. They would not be so dependent on outside assistance. They would find a pleasure and success in it, that would amply reward them for all their labour and self-denial.

This, then, is the first essential for a successful teacher: the taking a hearty interest in the work. And this qualification, while it would go far to make up for deficiencies in knowledge, is one that is equally open for all to seek, and to become possessed of. The least qualified as to learning and ability, may possess this far more valuable power. The most timid and incompetent in other respects, may, at least, possess this, and so secure the affection of the children, and obtain an influence over them which no skill in teaching will procure for them. Let us seek then this essential element to success. Let us endeavor to look at our work in the light of its spiritual character and results, and remembering the importance of it, remembering how precious the souls committed to our care, how precious these opportunities of instruction, remembering

what glorious results may be secured by our fidelity, what abundant harvests may yet be gathered, even in this present life, from the seed sown in prayer and earnestness in these young hearts ; let us go forth bearing the precious seed in faith and hope, prosecuting our work with loving and warm hearts, and we shall yet return "joyful as when the reapers bear the harvest treasures home." Be in earnest in your work.

But I come now to a second qualification which I deem essential to success in a teacher ; and that is thorough sympathy with the young. A capacity to enter into and sympathize with the feelings and thoughts of children of every age. This is a qualification of very great importance, and one that no learning can impart, no convention discover a means of implanting. It is a qualification independent of station, sex, or acquirements, and one without which a teacher will not be able to gain the affection of his pupils, or obtain much influence over them. It does not mean merely softness of temper, or willingness to give children their own way in all things, which many seem to think manifests a very loving and sympathetic disposition. But it does mean a capacity to understand the disposition and temper of a child, to appreciate the present standing of the child as to character and knowledge, in the light of its home condition and training, and so to adjust admonition and teaching to its peculiar case. In the same class there are great differences of disposition ; the conditions of

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home life are very various, and the faculty of attention and acquiring knowledge are very different. There are the timid, who require notice and encouragement ; the forward, who require a gentle bringing down to a humbler spirit ; the slow and plodding, who require long patience and warm encouragement ; the quick and light minded, who require direction and steadying. There is in all the spiritual darkness, the ignorance of the Gospel and of the way of salvation, which should engage on their behalf our warmest sympathy and interest, and draw forth our most earnest prayers. Such are some only of the varieties of condition and character found in our classes ; and the wooden and strait-laced individual, who attempts to treat all alike, and employ the same methods with all, is incapable of dealing with them successfully, no matter how learned he may be, or how great an adept in following out the newest methods introduced into the modern Sabbath School. But let me mention a few particulars of conduct to which this sympathy with the young will naturally lead the teacher. And first, I notice as of very great importance : Taking kindly notice of each individual scholar. Not merely knowing their names, but showing the scholars you are glad to see them present, and have been careful to notice their punctuality and good behaviour. In short, impressing the scholar with the fact that he or she is kindly thought of by you, as one whom you feel an interest in, and whom you are glad to see present. Children do not like to be slighted any more than grown-

up people. They are just as sensitive to neglect. (And not only are scholars lost to our schools by this careless slighting of them, but many an adherent is lost to our church every year by that high Presbyterian disdain or disinclination to trouble itself by taking notice of individuals attending, or willing to attend, our church.) And so I believe our influence over our pupils is much weakened, and soon declines, because our intercourse with them has not impressed them with the thought that we regard them as anything more than chance scholars thrown in our way for an hour to be formally taught, and then dismissed from the mind. It is an ancient maxim, that great reverence is due to the young. And it is a wise and important saying. And the putting of it in practice, the taking kindly notice of each child, will do much to bind them to the school and to their church, even if their school in other respects be not so attractive as you would wish. And here, in this simple suggestion, I think will be found one remedy for the evil, more or less felt and deplored in all our schools, namely, the frequency with which the scholars, when they have reached the age when they emerge from childhood, and are entering on the years of young manhood or womanhood, desert the Sabbath School and sometimes even the church. Does this great evil not arise in part, at least, from the fact that they do not find that sympathy in their teacher, and that adaptation in his teaching to their wants and feelings which they ought to find. They are not watched over with affectionate interest, but regarded

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simply as troublesome scholars, who ought to know better. If at this important point in their youth they were kindly watched over and directed, and made to feel that they had in their teacher a personal friend, one who was really anxious for their welfare, and one who recognized that they were no longer mere children, but were beginning to be visited with the restless spirit incident to their age, and required very special notice and counsel, I am convinced they would not regard the school merely as a dull, uninviting place of restraint, but a place where they found pleasure in resorting, and meeting with the teacher, whom they had learned to regard as their best friend. It is only by the arms of a loving sympathy such scholars can be retained, and the training of former years carried forward to its legitimate result. By carelessness and coldness at this point, how often is all the past teaching thrown away. But further, as naturally flowing from this sympathy with our scholars, regard will be paid to some extent to their life and associations at home, and during the week. Where they have been through the week, and how surrounded, is of great consequence in its bearing on their training in religious truth on Sabbath. Therefore the good teacher will not be content merely to see them before him, but will wisely inquire into their home life and daily habits. Only then can he know wherein the child needs specially to be warned, directed, and encouraged. This will lead to visits to the child's home ;

to careful inquiry as to his absence from the class; to kind attention in times of sickness, or other trouble.

Here especially, very many teachers come short. They neither know, nor care where the children live, or if they know, as in small schools they must, still they are never found from one year's end to another enquiring for the children at their own homes.

People constantly demand that ministers should visit their flocks. And no doubt it is a duty which every pastor discharges according to his opportunity. For similar reasons, a teacher should know the homes, and the haunts of his children, and the character of their associates, not only that he may know how suitably to instruct them, but that he may know also how to sympathize with them, and so secure a stronger hold on their affection and confidence. And when we consider how few scholars are found in one class, and that these same scholars are often under the care of the same teacher for one or two years or more, surely it is not expecting or demanding too much, that they should be intimately known at home as well as at school, and that the teacher should carry on his work in a spirit of sympathy with every member of his class. There are other consequences that would flow from the possession of this capacity to understand and sympathize with our scholars, on which I need not dwell. I trust sufficient has been said to show how important a qualification this is for the teacher, and that an earnest effort will be

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made, so far as it is in our power, to make up for past deficiencies in this respect. Let us seek to live in the affections of our scholars. Let us be their friend as well as their teacher. And then we will find that our instructions are not without avail ; that our authority will not be despised ; and that we are being used of God to guide these young hearts in the way of life everlasting.

But leaving this aspect of the teacher's duty for your own further consideration, I notice briefly the one remaining qualification, which appears to me of very great importance in one who seeks to be a Sabbath School Teacher. It is very essential then, in this work, that those who engage in it should be persons possessed of a good share of common sense. Of course this is a qualification rarely found in very high development among ordinary people. But all I would plead for is simply the possession of a fair measure of *sound sense*. We can get on with people who have a measure of this valuable ingredient of character, but it is almost impossible, certainly very irksome, to work with those who have not. Without this as ballast in the character, zeal is apt to be troublesome, and many injurious and foolish whims are apt to find scope for display and mischief, in the carrying on of our work. But the possession of this will insure an effort on the teacher's part, to accommodate himself to the circumstances of the school. He will not expect every one to adopt his opinions and bow to his judgment. He

will not be always on the outlook for slights by fellow-teachers or superintendent. He will not consider himself as the person of chief consequence in the school, nor expect that he should be exempt from the ordinary rules which govern it. The possession of this will moderate his criticisms, will lead to the adoption of wise expedients, and, in short, will govern and direct his work into a useful practical line. It will make him a great help to the pastor and superintendent; a wise counsellor to the children; and one who will be in every emergency of use. And where such sound sense is under the controlling direction of love to the Saviour, and accompanied by a spirit of devotion to the work, it will go far to produce teachers of the most useful and successful character. It will be more than a substitute for a good deal of Latin and Greek. It will more than make up for an ignorance of the hobbies of modern Sunday Schoolism. It will go far to atone for the want of that ability and knowledge which it is desirable to possess. It will always lead its possessor to do his little part of the whole, humbly, contentedly, and in a wise and practical manner. I have thus concluded all I have time to say with reference to the teacher. And while it would be easy to enumerate a great many qualities more or less essential, it appears to me to be entirely unnecessary to do so. If we have not the qualifications mentioned above, any others we may have will be of little use. With any teacher possessing these, we would be abundantly

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satisfied, namely : (1), a hearty interest in the work ; (2), a capacity to sympathize with the young ; and (3), a fair measure of common sense. These will carry with them inevitably, a great many other essential elements for success in the work, that need not be enumerated. Nor I think can it be said, that in asking these we are asking or expecting too much. This is a minimum below which any material that may be found, will be of comparatively little use ; and if we cannot get these, it would be better to postpone the attempt at teaching without them, and endeavor by some other means to meet the necessities of the case.

Does, then, your hearty interest in your work lead you to do it cheerfully, diligently, prayerfully ? If not, then you need without delay to seek a fresh baptism of the Holy Ghost. Does your interest in the work lead you to seek out the best methods of doing it, as it leads a man to seek out how he may advance the business in which he is engaged ? Does your interest in the work find you often on your knees, that God may bless you in it, and make you more useful in promoting His glory ? If not, then you need to be aroused from your indifference ; you need to be made more alive to your obligations, and stirred up to a more diligent service. Does your sympathy with the young lead you to follow your class through the week, and through the year, with watchful and loving care, that they may be found in the great day among the lambs of His fold ? Does it win for you their confi-

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dence and affection? Do they recognize in you their friend? And does your good sense tell you, that a heartless, unsympathetic, unpunctual, and prayerless discharge of your duty as a Sabbath School teacher, is neither in keeping with your profession as a Christian man or woman, nor with your occupation as the honoured servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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## LECTURE III.

### ON THE TEACHING OF THE LESSON.

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THE subject that comes under our consideration this evening, is one that is not only interesting, but somewhat difficult to deal with in anything like an exhaustive manner, in the limits to which we are confined. Here, as in the case of the former subjects discussed, let us be content in trying to lay down a few general principles, in the light of which we must proceed in our work. And in discussing the subject, I do not refer to any of the commonly received authorities on the question under consideration, both for the sake of brevity, and because any intelligent teacher who wishes to procure books on the subject, can easily ascertain where these are to be had. At the same time it must be kept in mind, that there is no royal road to competency as a teacher. We can only reach that by persevering, personal application. We can only reach it by our own efforts. And if our interest in the work, and our own good sense, do not lead us to seek for the best methods, then dictation and lecturing from others will not make us competent for the

instructing of those entrusted to our care. Suppose, then, the teacher to ask himself, when he sits down with the lesson in his hand, and the young people before him, what now should I remember in entering on this duty? It being taken for granted that the teacher is a sensible Christian man or woman, deeply interested in the work.

We are to remember that those before us are young people; that in many cases we have to deal with minds uninstructed, perhaps unintelligent; with minds not trained to give close attention, or not disposed to do so; with youthful spirits, little disposed to serious thought. It is this that renders their instruction so difficult; that demands on your part the qualities already referred to; and that demands that you should proceed in the work of teaching them, in such a way as to make the most of the material you have before you, and to make the most of your opportunity. The lesson to be taught is contained in the passage from the Bible appointed for the day, and in our case, the question from the Catechism in addition,—an amount of material that affords abundant subject of instruction to occupy the teacher for the time at his disposal. Supposing, then, we have got the right kind of teacher, the class before him, and the lesson to be taught, what guiding principles are we to keep in view? Now it would be possible to mention many different things that should be kept in view; to lay down a great number of directions and rules for teaching; but I speak of only such principles as will carry many of

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these subordinate directions along with them, and as are of radical importance, supposing the teacher's own intelligence will guide him to any others less fundamental; as indeed it might these also. And the first that seems to me of essential importance, and lying at the very basis of our success, is this, namely: To avoid attempting to teach too much at one time; that is, to give only such instruction as you know the class capable of receiving at the time. The error of attempting to teach too much is a very common one; not only practised in our Sabbath Schools, but in other schools as well; a mistake, this, no doubt often arising from the very strong desire to do as much good as possible to the young people before us, and arising from the idea, that in order to do all the good possible in the time allotted, it is necessary to go over a great deal of ground. And sometimes, after the teacher has given all the lessons he can find in the passage, and all he can infer from it, and all he can remember of what other people have inferred from it, he finds the time not yet exhausted, and feels as though he had not yet said enough.

Now, if instead of going over with the class a great variety of topics, one or two had been chosen, and dwelt on, and illustrated, until they were clearly understood by every member of it, he would find that the time was more than exhausted before these lessons were. We must remember the youthfulness of those before us; that there is no use in expecting them to remember much more than these one or two lessons

of the passage. Scarcely a dozen people in an ordinary congregation, will remember the two or three heads of discourse they have listened to on Sabbath, twelve hours after the service, and we need not expect the children to remember more than their seniors, even though the teaching be more pointed and personal. And yet, in the excellent notes on the lessons in the various religious newspapers, there are many lessons and truths inculcated, notes on geography, history and biography, with many other appendices, all of which it may be well for a teacher to know, but a very small part of which children, such as are in our classes, can learn, so as to remember them in the short space of half an hour. Because, to repeat, (1), the time is too short for more than one or two important truths to be taught effectively ; and (2), the minds of children cannot grasp more at one time, so that they shall be duly impressed by them ; and (3), to set before them more than they can clearly apprehend and remember, only confuses and discourages, and renders the whole practically useless. The complaint is often made, that our children do not gain much instruction in our Sabbath Schools. I believe the complaint is in many cases well founded, and that the cause, to a large extent, lies in this error of which I speak, namely, the attempt to teach too much at one time. We see in the example of our Lord, how slowly and gradually he attempted to impart to his chosen disciples the truths of the kingdom. His principle is laid down in these pregnant words : " I have yet many things to say unto

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you, but ye cannot bear them now."—John xvi., 12. Do not, therefore, be pressed into this mistake by your copious notes, which are no doubt accountable for much of this injudicious practice. Remember, one truth got possession of, one fact retained, one lesson well learned, is of much more use than a great number of facts and lessons gone over, but as soon forgotten. I am aware that the common method of going over a great variety of lessons is the easier of the two ; for to make one or two truths extend through the hour, requires conscientious study. The other method does not. But the one method is teaching ; the other is, for the most part, simply a waste of time. Now in this principle, others subordinate, yet important, are involved ; for when we remember who are before us, and attempt to teach only what they can take in and carry away, then will follow : (1), that we teach it in a way suitable to their capacities ; and (2), that we teach it in a way likely to impress the heart. 1. That we teach it in a way suitable to their capacities ; the very fact that we have fixed on this particular lesson as the one we wish to impart, will lead us to try and impart it effectively. We will not speak as if we were addressing aged Christians, or mature men and women, or even thoroughly instructed youth ; but we will break up the truth in a way that will meet the understanding of our youthful flock. Much of our teaching is quite unsuited for our classes in this way. We deal with them as if they were far in advance of where they really are. We talk of doctrines to them, and use terms of which they

have not the vaguest conception. We forget altogether that we are dealing often with ignorant, thoughtless boys and girls. Our effort rather should be, in the light of the principle laid down, to make the lesson bear on the youthful life, with its temptations, and evil tendencies, and difficulties. To say virtually: This is how it applies to you. This is how the truth should lead you to act. Bringing down in this way the truth from the region of vagueness and mystery, to the battle-field of daily life, where the value of their instruction is to be tested, and the value of the truth to be displayed and experienced. This aspect of teaching the lesson is one of radical importance; and to giving our teaching this practical and appropriate character, our highest attention should be directed. But further, this principle will lead us to teach in the way we think most likely to impress the heart. For when we remember we have but children before us, we will realize that children, in order to be impressed, must be made to understand the truth clearly, and this by means of suitable illustration, from circles of life and experience, and from such facts of science and history as they are already familiar with. Hence we will be led to seek such illustrations of the lesson we are engaged on, as will be likely to tell on their impressible hearts, and so doing, will rivet the lesson upon their memory. Without dwelling on this, it is manifest, if we attend to the principle laid down, of not attempting too much, but trying only to impart what is capable of being made use of, we will be led to adopt not only these

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methods referred to, but such other methods as will seem most effective in imparting to the mind of the class, and enabling them to remember, the lessons set before them ; so that we need not to multiply rules, if this principle be kept before the mind. Remembering the character and age of the class that sits before us ; remembering their weaker capacity to receive instruction ; having clearly before our own minds the truths we desire to impress upon them ; will the intelligent and interested teacher leave anything undone that he knows or can find to be of use, to assist him in conveying these truths to his youthful hearers ? Will he require to be dictated to from without, as to his manner of teaching ? will he require to have questions put into his mouth ? Will he require to be warned against vain and wearisome preaching to his class ? Will not his clear apprehension of this simple principle, direct him, and prompt him to a course of plain, practical, and useful teaching ?

But further, as suggested by what has been said, and as a principle of almost equal importance, I would say : Be independent in your method of working. Do not suffer yourself to be dictated to by others as to how you shall do it. You are supposed to possess a measure of intelligence, and to have some sense of the importance of what you are to teach. You are also understood to have not only some knowledge of the truth to be taught, but an intimate knowledge of each of the scholars you are to teach. You know their attainments, you know their dispositions ; you know how to

appeal to their feelings, and in what way they are most likely to be interested in the truths to be imparted ; therefore you ought to be the best judge of the method to be pursued in instructing them. And if you have the intelligence supposed, this very question, of how best to reach the hearts of your scholars, will have engaged your attention from the outset ; and you cannot possibly have considered this question carefully, without having arrived at such a conclusion as will be of the greatest use to you in your work.

Now very many teachers being young and inexperienced, instead of carefully considering this question for themselves, have turned to every side for advice and direction on this point, and have become confused by the variety of directions given. Or they have neglected the consideration of this question altogether, and teach on without any particular method, or without anxiously watching what the effect of their method has been. Or they try to apply some rules they have learned, and so their work becomes mechanical and irksome, instead of being done with liberty and ease, as they judge best for themselves and their class. If they are not working according to some system laid down to them, they feel as though they were not working in a right manner, while they may be doing much more wisely than in trying to adapt their teaching to some plan adopted by others. Therefore, I say, work out for yourselves a plan of procedure that suits you and your class, and never mind whose hobby you are trampling on by so doing. For whatever is done as

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the result of your own thought, even though it be not so scientific in method, will be better for yourself and the class than a laboured and imperfect attempt to carry out the rules and method of another. For example, in the questions you should ask, many rules are laid down to guide you ; but these questions will be best for you and your scholars which arise from your own study of the lesson, and from your own conceptions of the truth. If you are so much of a child as to require to be told what you should say and ask, you are too much of a child to be a teacher. If you know what you want to teach, teach it in your own way, earnestly and kindly, seeing that it is understood when you are finished, and never mind how others do it. Your own intelligence will soon tell you how you succeed, or how you might succeed better. And while listening to all instruction offered you, have a mind of your own about your work. Your work will then be done with interest to yourself, and with freedom, and so much more likely with success. And with regard to the scheme of lessons provided, it is doubtless well to have uniformity as far as possible in the lesson given ; but do not allow yourselves to be bound and hampered by that consideration. Many a teacher finds the passage prescribed very bare of material for him to occupy the time with ; and when this has been gone through with, finds the time is not exhausted, and is at a loss how to fill it up. He can say nothing more out of the passage, and feels restricted from going beyond it. There is no reason for this. Use the lesson to the utmost of

your ability, but if it seems barren to you, read on in the same portion, or wherever else you know you can find a suitable lesson. You are not to be bound by what is prescribed, but should act on your own judgment, filling up all the time with what you deem to be of use. But while saying this, the conscientious teacher, who has studied the lesson, will not often need to go beyond it; and it is implied in this suggestion, that you have done what you could to find material in the passage for the day. This habit of self-reliance will inevitably be the result of a faithful performance of your duty, and very soon will lead you to the method that is best for you to use, and will keep you from distraction in your work.

There is one other principle to which I think particular attention should be given in teaching the lesson, namely, this: That the teacher should see to it that the scholars have an intelligent idea of the facts and doctrines that are stated in the passage. That each verse should be read with care, and the fact or truth in it noted, whether dwelt on or not. Sometimes we find the passage is hurriedly read over, and then the teacher proceeds to draw lessons from it. These lessons are often very good and profitable. And they are naturally deduced from the passage. But, meantime, the passage itself is not known nor understood. The better way is, in the first place, to have each verse of the passage as to its terms, thoroughly understood, and then getting at the lessons to be deduced from it. This seems to me of very great importance. For in

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this way we make certain that a particular portion of Scripture is carefully gone over and understood each Sabbath. And though you may not have time to draw many, or any lessons from it, yet you have done a good work in fixing on the minds of the class whatever facts or doctrines were plainly stated in the passage. And not only so, but in this way you will easily find material to occupy the time, and you will have little difficulty in deducing lessons from the text under consideration. We may illustrate this by the manner in which preachers use their texts. Sometimes a text is given out, and without much consideration of the words of the text, several propositions, or heads, as we call them, are laid down as containing doctrines which may be fairly deduced from the text. But the terms of the text itself are not examined. So that while you may have got a very good sermon, you are not any better acquainted with the words composing the text, and while the heads of discourse were very good, quite different propositions might have been equally well taken from it. The other course sometimes followed, is to take as the foundation of remark the very terms of the text itself, and when the sermon is finished, you cannot but feel that you at least understand the meaning of that passage better than you did before. And there can be no doubt that such a method of preaching has at least this great benefit, that it leads to a fuller understanding of the text of Scripture, and brings Bible truth more directly to bear on the mind of the hearer. And the same benefits result from the use of this me-

thod in teaching. This method compels the children to attend to what they are reading. It acquaints them with that particular passage. It teaches them to look to the words of scripture itself for instruction. And this is a great deal to have accomplished. And it has the same effect on the teacher. It leads him to consider carefully the words of scripture, to seek out the facts and doctrines stated in the passage, and by the time he has gone over the lesson in this way, and got the scholars to know what is in it, he will have no difficulty in getting at the more important truths which the verses contain, and which he wishes to enforce.

If this method were carefully followed, we would have gone over in the year a large amount of scripture, much of which the children could not fail to remember, and to read afterwards with greater interest and intelligence. And when in addition to this, there was a more or less complete analysis of the passage, so that without referring to their Bibles the children could give the scope and substance of the lesson, a very considerable amount of instruction would have been imparted. Instead of adopting this course, teachers sometimes allow the passage to be read with carelessness and inattention, so that the scholars, when done reading it, could tell nothing of what it contains. And the teacher goes on immediately to take up such lessons as may be inferred from it. Perhaps as many as five or six important lessons are brought under their notice. These may be very good, but are not likely to make much impression, or be long remembered ; be-

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the children acquaints them with the passage, and then asks them to look up the passage in the Bible. And

And it has been found that it is more difficult for him to connect the lesson with the passage, and by the time he has read the passage, and got the meaning, he has no difficulty in finding the truths which are to be enforced.

And, we would not wonder if, of scripture, he is unable to remember the lesson, and interest and attention. And, if this is the case, there was no purpose in the passage, so that the children could not remember it. And, a very common error has been made, and teachers, with carelessness, when done, contains. And, in such lessons as many as are under their hands, it is not likely to be remembered; be-

cause the passage itself is not remembered or fully understood. Suppose, for example, our lesson was in Acts v., 1—11, where we have the story of Ananias and Sapphira. That we went over the passage in this way, noticing all the details of the story, taking up the whole time in fixing on the children's minds the story itself as given, would not the lesson of the passage be more firmly impressed upon them than if we read the narrative carelessly, and then spent our main effort in enforcing by illustrations of our own, the danger and wickedness of lying. Now, I believe it is because this method is not employed so much as it should be, that so little scriptural knowledge is obtained from all our teaching. We forsake the words and details of the scripture narrative too much, and go abroad to find the material for instruction. Consequently, we are often at a loss for matter; and after all our effort, little is remembered. Therefore, I would insist on this as a most important principle in teaching the lesson, that attention be paid to the words, and facts, and doctrines, as they are recorded, and an effort made to familiarize the children with these in the language of the lesson itself. In this way, much more will be accomplished than by the other method of paying more attention to the inferences we draw from the passage, than to the words of Scripture itself. And this principle, easily carried into effect, will be found not only best for the children, but much easier for the teacher. It will supply him with material for questions. It will lead him to study the words and bearing of the

passage. It will fix the truth in his own mind, and suggest in a natural way the lessons which it is important to make more prominent, and which he desires his class to remember.

If the teacher would keep these simple principles in view, and go to his work in a loving spirit, humbly relying on the Divine aid, his labours would not be in vain. But no work of this kind, however well done as to the method of it, will accomplish anything, unless it is done in genuine love to the souls entrusted to us, and to the Saviour, whose servants we are. The work also must be accompanied with prayer. Prayer for each scholar apart. Prayer before teaching, and after teaching. Such a course would soon be rewarded by scholars attentive and anxious to know the truth. Would soon be rewarded by one and another of them yielding their hearts to the Saviour. This is "our reward, our joy, our crown of rejoicing, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming."

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## APPENDIX.

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SOME writers of the present day on the Sabbath School, speak as if care for the children of the church were a modern phase of Christian effort. As if attention had not been given to this department of church work before the days of our modern Sabbath School. This, however, is an entire mistake. It is also an error to suppose that Robert Raikes was the first to call the attention of the church to her duty to the young. His work was a branch of benevolent enterprize which the Sabbath School of to-day takes very little to do with, namely, the instruction of the poor, neglected children lying outside of the church altogether. That kind of work was indeed much needed in his day, and is very much needed at the present time also. There is no doubt that much of the energy of the church to-day is taken up in teaching children whose parents ought to teach them. But in reference to the attitude of the church in former times to the young, the following brief extract from the works of ~~the late~~ Dr. John Owen will be read with interest, and will show that the church of his day was not so much in the dark on this subject as is commonly supposed. He asks, "Whether a Church may not, and ought not to take

under its inspection and rule such as are not yet meet to be received into full communion?" and answers as follows: "No doubt the Church may and ought to do so, and it is a great evil where it is neglected. For (1) children do belong unto, and have an interest in their parents' covenant, not only in the promise of it which gives them right unto baptism, but in the profession of it in the church covenant, which gives them a right unto all the privileges of the church whereof they are capable. (2) Baptizing the children of Church members, giving them thereby an admission into the visible Catholic Church, puts an obligation on the officers of the church to take care, as far as they can, that they may be kept and preserved meet members of it by a due watch over them, and instruction of them. (3) The duty of the church towards these consists (a) in prayer for them, (b) catechetical instruction of them according to their capacities, (c) advice to parents concerning them, (d) visiting them in the families they belong to, (e) encouragement of them or admonition according as there is occasion, (f) direction of them, for a due preparation unto the joining of themselves unto the church in full communion; (g) exclusion of them when unworthy.

The neglect herein is carefully to be watched against, and it doth arise (1) from ignorance of the duty in most that are concerned in it. (2) From the fewness of officers in most churches, both teaching and ruling, who are to attend unto it. (3) The want of a teacher, or catechist in every church, to attend to this work.

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(4) Want of a sense of their duty in parents, (a) in not valuing aright the great privilege of having their children under the care of the church ; (b) in not instilling into them a sense of their privilege in this respect ; (c) in not bringing them duly into the church assemblies : (d) in not preparing and disposing them into an actual entrance into full communion with the church ; (e) in not advising with the elders of the church ; (f) especially by an indulgence into that loose and careless kind of education in conformity to the world, which generally prevails. Hence it is, that most of them on various accounts and occasions, drop off, here and there, from the communion of the church, and all relation thereunto, without the least respect unto them, or inquiry after them. Churches being supplied by such as are occasionally converted in them."

There are, then, two branches of effort to which the Church, through the Sabbath School, is specially called, namely, first, to endeavor to keep the youth of the church in the church ; and, second, to reclaim those that are without. There is a justly grounded fear that, in some cases, the School is training up a generation to find their spiritual nourishment outside of the ordinary worship of the sanctuary, and so is not building up the church to the extent that might be expected.

The Sabbath School we need now in all our churches is one in which mainly children who cannot be taught at home, are found. One in which are children whose parents attend no church. One which would train children to love and frequent the ordinary worship of

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the sanctuary. Children who are taught to worship the God of their fathers reverently in His house, with their seniors, are taught what is of more consequence than any lesson they can learn in the way of religious habits in the Sabbath School. Those who are taught to think that the Sabbath School is a substitute for the public worship of God, in which the church engages, are taught a lesson that accounts to a large extent for the non-church-going habits manifested by them in after years. And, finally, while we insist on the duty of the church to the young, let us not neglect the equally important work of insisting on the duty of the young to the church !



